MARVEL

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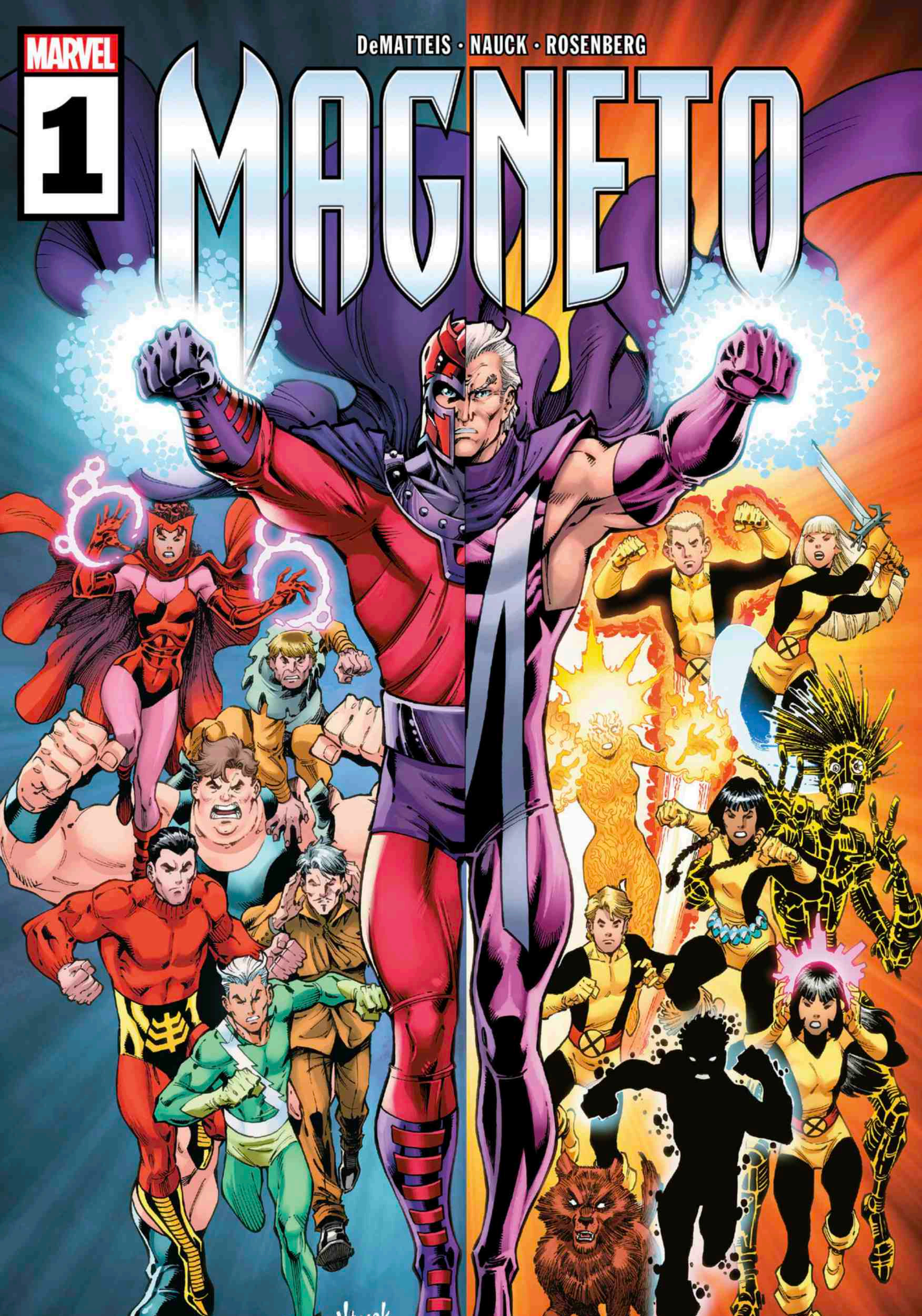
DeMATTEIS • NAUCK • ROSENBERG

MAGNETO



I DUNNO, GUYS--

--I THINK WE'RE IN ***WAY*** OVER OUR HEADS HERE!

YOU KIDDING, ***SAM?*** WE'LL TAKE THESE LOSERS APART!

I WISH I HAD YOUR CONFIDENCE, ***BOBBY!***

WISHING WON'T MAKE IT SO, ***RAHNE***-- SO LET'S JUST DO OUR JOB!

SELFRIEND ***DANI*** IS CORRECT! IN THE PARLANCE OF YOUR SPECIES--

--LET US PROPEL OUR LOWER APPENDAGES THROUGH THEIR DERRIERES!

I THINK YOU MEAN "LET'S KICK SOME ASS!"

DID SELF NOT JUST ARTICULATE THAT, SELFRIEND DOUGLAS?

How long has it been since Asteroid M hovered above the world, a constant threat to the billions below?

Since Quicksilver, the Scarlet Witch, Mastermind, Unus, and Toad served their dark master, sowing fear among humankind...

...and Charles Xavier's X-Men rose up to oppose them?

But there are no X-Men here now to save the day. No, these nine--however gifted--have so much to learn.

They're just children, really.

But weren't Scott, Jean, and the others mere children too when they began their war against the so-called "evil" mutants?

And children suffer in war, children die...

...all the time.

MAGNETO
EVIL MUTANT
Chapter One: Things Past!

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SWAKK

LOOK AT YOU--SO WEAK...SO INEFFECTUAL.

NO MATCH FOR THE POWER OF THE BROTHERHOOD!

Yet Charles sent them out, again and again, to face the most brutal adversaries. Why?

DO NOT BE EMBARRASSED BY THE EASE WITH WHICH YOU WERE DISPATCHED, SELFRIENDS!

I'M NOT EMBARRASSED!

WELL, MAYBE A LITTLE.

SELF WILL ENSURE YOUR SAFE LANDING.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, WARLOCK!

RIGHT! WE CAN TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES!

EVIDENCE POINTS TO A CONTRARY CONCLUSION.

Arrogance? Overconfidence?

RELAX, GUYS--

Or perhaps he was so swollen with self-importance that he believed NO HARM could ever come to those...

...who served his "righteous" cause?

--AH'VE GOT THIS!

THOOOM

PIETRO!

No. I do him a disservice. If Charles has a fatal flaw, it's that he's hopelessly naïve...

IF YOU'VE HURT MY BROTHER--

--I'LL BRING THIS ENTIRE STATION CRASHING DOWN ON YOUR HEADS!

YOU'LL HAVE T'GET PAST ME T' DO IT!

...believing, with profound and misplaced passion, in the inherent decency of both mutants and humans.

THAT CAN BE *EASILY* ARRANGED!

FRAK

But how many have *paid the price* for that naïvete?

And how many *more* will pay in the months and years to come?

YOU LIKE TO PLAY WITH *MAGIC*, WITCH? WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU--

Dark thoughts...

...for dark times.

--MAGIK IS MY NAME!

KRA-KAAAAAAK

NO!

But if I am to fulfill my role, then perhaps I need to *push back* that darkness...

TOOOM

YES!

...and embrace at least *some* of Charles' idealism.

His admirable, infuriating hope for the future.

Hope? If there is any, it lies with *these* brave young people.

I'VE GOTTA ADMIT--THIS IS *EXTREMELY* COOL!

TAKATAKATAKA

SELF IS WELL AWARE OF SELFSOULFRIEND'S FONDNESS FOR *ROBOT ANIME.*

MECHACYPHER TO THE RESCUE!

IDIOTS! THERE'S A REASON THEY CALL ME--

--UNUS THE *UNTOUCHABLE!*

BADOOM

They fight with such reckless courage, such unearned bravado, that I can't help but admire them.

And worse: *care* about them.

A MOST IMPRESSIVE TRICK WITH THE *FORCE-FIELD--*

--BUT IT WON'T HELP WHEN YOU'RE COVERED IN *LAVA!*

But the *more* I care, the more the weight of this task crushes me. For if any of them were to be hurt on my watch...

...I think my heart--what *remains* of it--would shatter. And perhaps...

BACK OFF FROM MY *PAL,* LADY--

--OR I'LL SNAP THESE TWO IN HALF LIKE A COUPLE OF CHEAP PLASTIC *ACTION FIGURES!*

...my mind *with* it.

I THINK *NOT!*

THANKS, *XUÂN!* IF YOU HADN'T *POSSESSED* HIM, WE--

OH *NO.*

XUÂN...? WHAT'S *WRONG?*

THE BEYONDER!

Dark thoughts again. Difficult to resist a lifetime of conditioning. But I must resist...

...for *their* sake.

BUT...BUT *HE* WASN'T PART OF THE BROTHERHOOD!

THEY WERE MERELY YOUR FIRST TEST. A *MINOR* ANNOYANCE. WHILE *I*--

--AM *DEATH ITSELF.*

Where has the courage, the bravado, gone...

...as they stand facing the other-dimensional entity who once ***wiped them*** from the face of existence?

No, now there's only well-earned terror. ***NOW*** they...

YOU MAY BE DEATH, BUT I AM...BEYOND EVEN ***THAT.***

I AM THE END OF ***ALL*** THINGS. I AM--

--OBLIVION.

...Fall?

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

I FIGURED THE ONLY WAY TO TAKE OUT ***ONE*** COSMIC ENTITY IS BY CONJURING UP A ***BIGGER, BADDER*** ONE!

AND, ACCORDING TO WHAT ***ICEMAN*** ONCE TOLD ME, ***OBLIVION*** IS AS BAD AS THEY COME.

WELL DONE, DANI! WELL *DONE!*

IT WAS... *WASN'T* IT?

GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT AFTER ALL. WE TOOK THE BROTHERHOOD DOWN AND BARELY BROKE A SWEAT!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE ORIGINAL X-ERS CONSIDERED THOSE LOSERS A THREAT!

"LOSERS," *SUNSPOT?* YOU'RE SPEAKING OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

FELLOW MUTANTS...TORTURED SOULS...WHO HAVE BEEN CONSTANTLY HOUNDED AND HUNTED--SIMPLY FOR BEING *DIFFERENT.*

SOMETHING I'D THINK YOU WOULD ALL *RELATE* TO.

BUT WE *BEAT* 'EM, *MAGNETO!* WASN'T THAT THE POINT? ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANTED?

THE TRUE VICTOR IN BATTLE, *CANNONBALL,* IS THE ONE WHO EMERGES WITH HIS *COMPASSION* INTACT.

WHO SEES HIS OPPONENTS AS MORE THAN DISTORTED CARICATURES. GROTESQUE OBJECTS OF HATE.

THEY'RE THE ONES FILLED WITH HATE! THEY... THEY BOAST ABOUT IT! CALL THEMSELVES *EVIL MUTANTS!*

AS DOSTOYEVSKY ONCE OBSERVED: "NOTHING IS EASIER THAN TO *DENOUNCE* THE EVILDOER; NOTHING IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN TO *UNDERSTAND* HIM."

AND WHILE YOU'RE PONDERING *THAT* BIT OF WISDOM--

FRAAAAAK

--WATCH YOUR BACKS.

END PROGRAM.

XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
Late December. A few years ago...

SENTINELS? THAT...THAT WASN'T FAIR!

SAM'S RIGHT! YOU CAN'T JUST KEEP THROWING THINGS AT US WHEN OUR GUARD IS DOWN.

AS I LEARNED EARLY ON, KARMA, LIFE ISN'T REMOTELY FAIR--AND OUR WORST NIGHTMARES TEND TO MANIFEST--

--WHEN WE LEAST EXPECT THEM.

THAT ARROGANT, SELF-RIGHTEOUS--! LECTURING US ABOUT COMPASSION--

--AFTER ALL HE'S DONE? ALL THE PEOPLE HE'S HURT?

ALL THE *SUFFERING* HE'S CAUSED?

All the *suffering.*

Yes, I've certainly caused my share.

And yet, somehow, I've ended up here at this school, taking up the work of a man who was both my *worst enemy...*

...and most *treasured friend.*

Who haunts me like a ghost, his voice keeping me awake, daring me to *transcend* myself...transcend my *past...*

...and become what?

A *hero?*

The term is *utterly meaningless.*

Heroes. Villains. All of us are just flawed, fragile humans...

...Facing complex circumstances.

RAHNE...?

Making *impossible* choices.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AWAKE?

I COULDN'T SLEEP, SIR. MY MIND... SOMETIMES IT STARTS *BUZZIN' AWAY* AN'--

IT SEEMS OUR MINDS WORK IN SIMILAR WAYS.

CAN'T SLEEP, EITHER?

JUST A BIT... RESTLESS.

NOW, WHAT'S ALL *THIS?*

I WAS... UH... THINKIN' ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID TODAY... ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE EVILDOER.

AND THE EVILDOER IN QUESTION WOULD BE...?

ME.

Chapter 6
The COMING of MAGNETO
The Cape Citadel Event

THESE BOOKS... *CHARLES* WROTE THEM. HIS PERSONAL-- ONE MIGHT SAY *BIASED*--HISTORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF *MUTANTKIND.*

I THINK THESE ARE THE ONLY COPIES IN THE WORLD.

A *GOOD THING.*

I WOULD TAKE YOUR PROFESSOR'S WORDS WITH MORE THAN A GRAIN OF *SALT,* RAHNE.

THEN MAYBE *YOU* CAN HELP ME UNDERSTAND, SIR.

UNDERSTAND *WHAT?*

HOW THE COMPASSIONATE TEACHER I'VE COME *T' ADMIRE* AN' *RESPECT*--

--AN' THE *TERRORIST* WHO ATTACKED *CAPE CITADEL*...WHO SHOWED *NO REGARD* FOR HUMAN LIFE--

--COULD *POSSIBLY* BE THE SAME PERSON.

SOME QUESTIONS, CHILD--

SLAM

--ARE BEST LEFT *UNASKED!*

GOOD NIGHT, RAHNÉ.

DON'T BE UPSET, SIR... *PLEASE!* I'M ONLY TRYIN' T' GET IT ALL STRAIGHT IN MY HEAD!

I KNOW YOU'VE STRUGGLED... *SUFFERED*... BUT--

YOU KNOW

NOTHING!

Look at her eyes: she's *terrified*...

...and with good reason. I nearly lost *control* of my magnetic powers. Nearly--

OH, RAHNE-- I'M *SORRY*. BUT YOU SEE, CHILD--

--YOU COULD READ A *THOUSAND* BOOKS--

--AND *STILL* HAVE NO IDEA.

THEN *TELL* ME, SIR--

--*PLEASE*.

LET THE PAST--

--*STAY DEAD*.

BELIEVE ME... IT'S BETTER FOR *ALL* OF US IF YOU DO.

NOW OFF TO BED WITH YOU.

AND TOMORROW, I PROMISE, YOU'LL ALL GET THE *HOLIDAY PARTY* YOU'VE BEEN *BEGGING* ME FOR.

G'NIGHT, SIR. SLEEP WELL.

A sweet sentiment.

But I haven't had a good night's sleep since--

NO, Erik. Don't look back. Look forward.

You've got to keep yesterday at bay, or it will come swarming from the shadows...

...and overwhelm you.

WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?

SPEAK UP. DON'T JUST STAND THERE GAPING AT ME WITH ACCUSING EYES.

YOU THINK I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HER?

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? THE WORLD IS AS CRUEL NOW AS IT WAS THEN. IN SOME WAYS, IT'S FAR WORSE.

RAHNE...AND ALL THESE CHILDREN... HAVE ENOUGH PAIN OF THEIR OWN, AND THEY DON'T NEED TO BE BURDENED--

--WITH MINE.

My mother, father and sister. My beloved Magda and our little Anya.

And that damn boy.

Time and again, I push the memories down.

Lock them away.

The DAWN of HOMO SUPERIOR
A History
Volume 3
by Charles Xavier

But they always come back.

Perhaps that's why I programmed the original Brotherhood into the Danger Room this morning.

Perhaps I'm asking the same fundamental question Rahne is:

Who is Magneto?

There are times even *I'm* not sure. And when I think back to that day at Cape Citadel,* when I first stepped onto the world stage, I am both *proud*...

...and *terribly* ashamed.

Most people saw me as a one-dimensional villain. A raging, out-of-control lunatic who desired nothing less than the *subjugation* of the human race.

But what they didn't understand...what I couldn't *let* them understand...

...was that Magneto was a mask, a role, a *game* I was playing for the benefit of mutantkind. And perhaps...

SURRENDER THE BASE OR I'LL TAKE IT BY FORCE! MAGNETO

...for the *entire world.*

The humans feared mutants. Hated them. But they needed a *singular object* for their hate.

I *provided* it.

*AS ORIGINALLY SEEN IN *X-MEN (1963) #1!* --MB

The melodramatic name, the helmet and cape, the anger and arrogance. The merciless threat to everything they held dear.

Magneto became the *total manifestation* of humanity's mutant nightmares.

And that, of course, allowed *them* to step forward...

...and *save the world.*

WE'VE *FOUND* HIM! *X-MEN... ATTACK!!*

I knew Charles would send his students to confront me--rising up against their own kind in order to protect the very people who despised them.

"See?" the humans would say. "They're not *all* bad. There are *good* mutants too. Risking their lives--for *us.*"

And, over time, the image of our people would change.

No longer monsters--but *equals.*

Or *not.*

FOOLS! IT IS I--

My plan was dangerous--and perhaps dangerously *naïve.* There was *every chance* it would fail. That Charles' efforts to oppose me would have no *impact* at all.

--WHO HAVE FOUND *YOU!*

That the humans' hate for mutants would deepen. Calcify.

Become *permanently embedded* in their DNA.

And, if that was the case, I would have to immerse myself in the role I was playing. Embrace Magneto, *become* him...

...and *grind* humanity beneath my bootheels.

*Ah...*but the past was always there to restrain me. *Accuse* me.

And the boy was their spokesman. *Always* the boy. Dressed, not in the finery of his early years...

...but in the wretched uniform of *Auschwitz.*

24005

He begged me, *pleaded* with me, to stop. "These," he said, "are *their* methods: the *Nazi animals* who *slaughtered* our family.

"Tore our life to *shreds.*

"Continue on this path--and there will be no *difference* between you." But I *had* to continue.

Why couldn't he *see* that?

"He"? No--*me.*

SEE HOW EASILY I CAN REMOVE YOUR MAGNETIZED JUNK WITH MY ENERGY BEAM?

MUCH OBLIGED, *CYCLOPS!*

The child, the *victim,* I once was--lifetimes ago.

How many times had I buried *Max Eisenhardt?* Repressed him? *Denied* him? And why did he always refuse...

ROCKET FUEL

NOT ALL THOSE WITH MUTANT POWERS ARE FIT TO RULE THE EARTH!

...to remain in his grave?

I knew the boy wasn't real. He was my own doubt, my guilt and shame--perhaps my *conscience*...

...*projected out* from the shadowed pits of my psyche.

YOU MUST BE DESTROYED!

HEADS UP, X-MEN! HERE COMES TROUBLE!

HE *IGNITED* THE ROCKET FUEL! IT'S GONNA *BLOW UP!!!*

WHAM

But there was no *room* for doubt then.

NOW WITH *THEM* OUT OF THE WAY, NOTHING REMAINS TO INTERFERE WITH THE MASTER PLAN OF THE MIRACULOUS *MAGNETO!*

No *place* for shame. So I buried him, buried all of them, again...

...and went on with the game.

THAT *BEAM*...FROM BENEATH THE GROUND! WHAT...WHAT DOES IT *MEAN?*

I admit my performance was more than a little... ***histrionic.*** But it did the job.

IT MEANS YOU'RE *FINISHED!*

After that day, the world never forgot "the miraculous Magneto."

And *I* never forgot those five extra-ordinary young people.

YOU HAVEN'T DEFEATED ME *YET!*

I CAN STILL ESCAPE YOU, FLYING BY MEANS OF MAGNETIC PROPULSION!

And, as I left the X-Men to enjoy the very triumph I'd so carefully ***engineered...***

...I felt ***pride*** in them--and ***hope*** for the future they embodied. Perhaps, I thought, my plan ***would*** work. Perhaps humanity would embrace these new heroes...

...and, through them, see mutantkind with eyes of compassion. And, if ***not***--well, I ***did*** have the power...

...to ***destroy them all.***

Would I have ***done*** it? Razed the Earth in the name of a better world?

Slaughtered whole populations so that my people could live free?

What's the old saying? "We are what we pretend to be"? And *God knows* I pretended...

...*all too well.*

There are times I believe that, in those early days, my magnetic powers warped my mind, distorted my thinking...

...*blurring the line* between the mask and the man.

But perhaps that theory is too easy, too obvious. Perhaps the truth is far more *complex*...

...and *unforgiving.*

24005

The night seems endless, but morning comes, eventually, and with it...

...a lightness of spirit.

For weeks now, my students have been badgering me about a holiday party, and, for weeks, I have dismissed their pleas and intensified their training.

Is the "stern headmaster" just another role--or was I really blind to their need for relaxation, release from the enormous pressures of their lives?

A bit of *both,* I think.

But now, like *Scrooge* reborn on *Christmas morning*...

...I find myself delighting in the prospect of a small party.

A time for these children to *be* children. And for their teacher to simply be...

CHIPS

...a *friend.*

When I left this morning, they were all enthusiastically engaged in decorating the mansion.

And the excitement in their voices, the joy in their eyes... warmed my heart.

A rare thing for a man whose life has been spent looking over his shoulder for the next disaster.

Who's seen joy turn to dust in his hands, again...

WAIT TILL YOU ALL SEE WHAT I BOUGHT!

NOTHING EVEN *REMOTELY--*

--NUTRITIOUS.

...and *again.*

DEAR GOD...NO.

NO!

I reflexively invoke a deity I abandoned many years ago. And, as usual...

...he proves himself both *useless*...

DOUG...?

XUÂN! AMARA!

SAM!

...and *cruel.*

ALL OF THEM...BEATEN INTO *UNCONSCIOUSNESS*--

--BUT *ALIVE,* AT LEAST.

NO, WAIT! ONE'S *MISSING!* WHERE'S--

--WARLOCK!

ALARM... ALARM...SYSTEM DISRUPTION... INTRUDER...!

WHO *WAS* IT, 'LOCK? WHO DID TH--?

SHAAAKK

HOW DARE YOU INVADE MY HOME?!

ATTACK MY STUDENTS?!

THESE CHILDREN AREN'T YOURS! THEY'RE XAVIER'S! AND YOUR HOME--

SHROOM

--IS WITH ME!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHO I AM?

SHOK-

-TOOOM

WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF?!

I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY. UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'RE THE ONE--

--WHO'S FORGOTTEN!

She's just a girl--no more than 18 or 19...

OH, MAGNETO--I HAVE DREAMED OF THIS ENCOUNTER FOR YEARS--

...yet her eyes reflect a burden far beyond her years.

--EVER SINCE WE FIRST MET!

Such sorrow there. Such ferocity. Such blind, unreasoning...

"FIRST MET"? I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE!

I WAS BENEATH YOUR NOTICE THEN! BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT THIS ENCOUNTER--

...hatred.

--IS ONE YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

KKTOOOMM

What's happening?

It's like...like a door's been thrown open in my mind.

And behind the door?

Ugliness.

Brutality.

Rage.

She's *tearing* it out of me--and I can't stop it.

SWAMM

Can't *control* it.

A *tsunami* of dark emotion...

HAHAHAHAHA!!

...sweeping me away.

YES!

GIVE IT TO ME!

A LIFETIME OF ANGER--

--THAT YOU'VE WORKED SO HARD TO *REPRESS* AND *DENY*!

GIVE IT TO ME!

AND ONCE I'VE ABSORBED *EVERY BLESSED DROP*--

WWOOL

--I'LL GIVE IT ALL BACK TO YOU!

YOU MAY NOT REALIZE IT NOW--

--BUT THIS IS A GREAT *GIFT*. AND ONE DAY--

--SOON, I HOPE--

--YOU'LL *THANK* ME.

...AH FEEL LIKE AN *ELEPHANT* STOMPED ON ME--

--FROM THE *INSIDE OUT.*

WHO... WHO *WAS* THAT?

FIGURED THAT OUT ALL BY *YOURSELF,* HUH?

SOMEONE WITH ENOUGH *POWER* TO TAKE EVERY ONE OF US DOWN WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT.

YOUR SARCASM IS BOTH UNKIND AND UNHELPFUL, DANI.

YOU'RE RIGHT. *SORRY,* DOUG.

S'OKAY. WE'RE ALL A LITTLE *SHAKEN UP* RIGHT NOW.

ANYONE HAVE A CLUE WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED? IT ALL CAME DOWN *SO FAST* THAT--

SOMETHING HIT ME...BUT IT ALMOST FELT LIKE I WAS BEING ATTACKED--

--FROM THE *INSIDE OUT?*

YES!

MEMORY CIRCUITS IN SEVERE DISARRAY--

--BUT SELF RECALLS MAGNETO-TEACHER SAVING SELF FROM *FEMALE INTRUDER,* AFTER WHICH--

TAK KLAK TOK

OBSERVE.

CONCLUSION: SAID FEMALE VANQUISHED MAGNETOTEACHER AND ABSCONDED WITH HIS BODY.

HIS BODY?

HE...HE'S DEAD?

INSUFFICIENT DATA.

WHO *IS* SHE? I'VE NEVER COME ACROSS HER IN ANY OF OUR FILES OR THE PROFESSOR'S HISTORIES--

RIGHT NOW, *WHO* SHE IS IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN *WHERE* SHE'S TAKEN MAGNETO.

WE MUST FIND HIM--AND BRING HIM *HOME.*

EASIER SAID THAN DONE, XUÂN.

"HE COULD BE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD."

MAX EISENHARDT. ERIK LEHNSHERR. MAGNUS. MICHAEL XAVIER.

THE NAMES YOU'VE HIDDEN BEHIND! THE ROLES YOU'VE PLAYED!

IT'S *NO WONDER* YOU'RE CONFUSED ABOUT YOUR IDENTITY! YOUR *PURPOSE!*

BUT THERE'S ONLY *ONE NAME* THAT REFLECTS THE *FIERY REALITY--*

--OF WHO YOU *TRULY* ARE.

IRAE, QUEEN OF WRATH, AND HER *SISTERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS* WELCOME YOU HOME--

--LORD MAGNETO!

HAIL MAGNETO! HAIL MAGNETO! HAIL MAGNETO! HAIL MAGNETO!

Next--
BETRAYAL!

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GUSTAVO DUARTE [HOWARD THE DUCK]; GREG LAND & FRANK D'ARMATA; LUCA MARESCA & EDGAR DELGADO VARIANT COVER ARTISTS

NEXT ISSUE

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5 YEARS EXPERIENCE

From Baaldur, with love...

GLORITH